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**TESTIMONY BY JOHN MURPHY ON BEHALF OF THE CONNECTICUT
CITIZEN ACTION GROUP IN FAVOR OF H.B. No. 5541, AAC SERVICES
PROVIDED BY DENTAL PROFESSIONALS AND CERTIFICATION
FOR ADVANCED DENTAL HYGIENE PRACTITIONERS.**

Good afternoon Senator Gerratana, Representative Ritter and members of the committee. My name is John Murphy, and on behalf of over 20,000 member families of the Connecticut Citizen Action Group, I am here today to testify of our support for HB 5541.

CCAG has been fighting for decades to provide access to quality health care to every Connecticut resident, and that includes access to oral health care. Currently, there are up to 40 percent of the Connecticut's low-income children that receive no preventive services and only 33 percent receive treatment services. Clearly, there is a need for more oral health care and you can help fill that need by creating a certification for Advanced Dental Hygiene Practitioners.

My sister is a Daughter of Charity, a Catholic order dedicated to working with the poor. Besides being a Sister, she graduated as a Physician Assistant from the Medical College of Georgia in 2001, allowing her to combine her calling with her medical skills. She has spent most of her time providing health care in underserved communities in Baltimore, Maryland and now in the Niagara Falls area. In both Maryland and New York she cannot work on her own; she must work under a doctor. The scope of the services she provides is limited to specified services and procedures allowed in each state. My sister fills a critical need in providing health care in underserved communities.

The reason I bring up these personal example is that mid level health practitioners like Physician Assistants and Nurse Practitioners work well and mid-level practitioners need to be allowed in oral health. The ADHP master's program is specific to advanced dental hygiene practice. ADHPs will be limited to specified services and procedures identified in the legislation, and will be supervised by dentists who agree to work with ADHPs. No one is required to work with an ADHP – the ADHP program will be voluntary.

ADHPs will perform only procedures for which they are educated and clinically trained – they will not perform “complex dental surgical procedures”, but will refer patients when more advanced treatment is needed. Most importantly, ADHPs practice in Public Health settings, serving primarily low-income and uninsured in underserved areas.

In closing, this committee has done a great job with Sustinet and other initiatives to expand access to quality health care. Anyone who is against this bill needs to lay out a plan to provide badly needed oral health care in underserved communities. Mid-level practitioners work well in health care – oral health should be no exception. Please pass HB 5541. Thank you.

CONNECTICUT CITIZEN ACTION GROUP

Putting People First

